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ABSTRACT

In June 1973, the New York State Board of Regents approved the establishment of the Coordinate Campus proposed by two private institutions, the C.W. Post Center of Long Island University and St. Joseph's College. This report describes the general purpose and history of upper-division education and examines the experiment in interinstitutional education as one solution to problems facing many private institutions. (MJM)

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An Experiment in Upper-Division Education

In June, 1973, the New York State Board of Regents approved the establishment of the Coordinate Campus proposed by two private institutions, the C.W. Post Center of Long Island University and St. Joseph's College. This report describes the general purpose and history of upper-division education and examines this experiment in inter-institutional education as one solution to problems facing many private institutions. The authors are Russell T. Lauper and Victor P. Meskill, respectively assistant vice president and vice president for administration at C.W. Post.

The change in enrollment patterns during the past decade encourages institutions of higher education to re-examine every aspect of their programs. Ernest Boyer, chancellor of the State University of New York, has pinpointed one area for change:

As we serve a wider range of students we must permit greater flexibility in the length of study arrangements. I think, for example, that the four years of high school/four years of college cycle must be challenged. There is, after all, no sacredness about the four-year baccalaureate.[1]

The evolution of the upper-division institution, a long-term development in the structure of American higher education, may now be reaching maturity. The upper-division institution admits students only after completion of a minimum of two years of college work; principal offerings are at the junior and senior level; in some cases, postgraduate study is available. These institutions are often viewed as the culmination of junior and community college programs. *As stated by the subcommittee on policies of the Advisory Council on Public Higher Education of the state of Washington's House of Representatives, "The main advantage of establishing an upper-division university is the avoidance of duplication in educational services." Other real advantages include an ability to create a single commuter oriented place for junior college graduates within a single geographic area, the opportunity to design programs which will facilitate transfer from local junior colleges, and the ability to strengthen the master's degree by tying it more closely to the baccalaureate in a coordinate three-year program of studies.*[2]

Historical Background

The first upper-level institution was the University of Georgia, which in 1861 was known as Franklin College. William Rainey Harper, in 1898 while president of the University of Chicago, initiated the separation of the first two years of the baccalaureate degree and used the term "junior college." The College of the Pacific is probably the best known of the early upper-division institutions, but it reverted to a four-year program in 1951.[3]

In 1960, Pennsylvania began to develop community colleges. When the state's Master Plan for Higher Education projected a need by 1970 for 15 community colleges, it became apparent that existing state universities could not meet the rising enrollment demands. In 1966, "an upper division college and graduate center in Pennsylvania became a reality and a forerunner to a small but growing number of such institutions across the nation."[4] The Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System found in 1972 that four-year institutions could not cope with the increasing number of junior college transfers. After investigating several alternatives, a commitment was finally made to establish upper-level institutions, resulting in the nation's largest network of public upper-level colleges.

As of April 1974 there were 32 such colleges in the nation, according to the Association of Upper-Level Colleges and Universities. Many educators still do not perceive that "the movement of students from junior to senior colleges rivals freshman admissions as the second

most important problem in access to higher education."[5] Perhaps it takes a time of crisis to cause social institutions to adapt to the needs of society. C.W. Post Center of Long Island University and St. Joseph's College have tried to assess those needs and develop a program to meet them, while simultaneously enabling each institution to remain viable and retain its character and mission.

Statewide and Regional Factors

The motivation for the establishment of the Coordinate Campus was derived from decisions made years ago about the entire state's educational network.

As early as 1944, during the initial plans for a statewide system of community and technical colleges, the Commissioner of Education in New York State, at that time George Stoddard, had encouraged the creation of an upper-division institution at the New School for Social Research as a logical and necessary addition to the system. Then in 1956, the New York State Regents proposed the creation of three new community colleges for Long Island, which admittedly, would still leave an unmet need for education beyond the two-year opportunities. Therefore, the Regents also suggested creation of a "senior" college of the junior, senior and first graduate years which would serve as the capstone to an integrated educational system.[6]

Seventeen years later, two private institutions teamed up to provide that necessary element. St. Joseph's College, in Brooklyn, and C.W. Post, in Nassau County, established a joint campus to serve the rapidly expanding population of Suffolk County, Long Island. The new unit is located on the campus of the now-closed Brentwood College, in a large, multi-purpose facility which still houses a convent and elementary and secondary-level religious schools.

C.W. Post had operated an undergraduate and graduate extension program for 13 years which enrolled approximately 375 students per semester. St. Joseph's College operated an extension program enrolling 75 part-time undergraduates. The small class sizes in the extension programs of both C.W. Post and St. Joseph's Colleges were indications of the duplication of undergraduate programs in Suffolk County. The two institutions were not competing only with each other: under a limitation established by the State Education Department restricting undergraduate offerings to freshman and sophomore levels, C.W. Post's program was duplicating courses offered at two-year colleges. Both institutions saw the need for an upper-division institution to intersect also with two nearby public institutions, Suffolk County Community College and the State University of New York at Farmingdale.

The upper-division concept was the most appropriate solution, given the resources available from each institution and the needs of the community. Much research was undertaken before either institution committed itself.[7] Federal, state and local demographic studies were utilized, and other institutions were consulted. By combining their resources and collective experiences, the result has been an educational institution that will place less strain on the financial resources of the two institutions. Moreover, the new program, predicated on a mutual concern to maintain each college's academic integrity, is stronger than that which either could offer independently.

Cooperative Curricula and Degree Programs

Although each aspect of the Coordinate Campus if taken independently is not unusual, their combination in one educational program may be unique. The joint facility has provided the resources, viability, and potential to meet the rapidly increasing demand for higher education facilities in Suffolk County. Students can draw from the library and other academic support services at the main campus of each institution. Higbee states that "The primary purpose for the creation of the modern upper-level institution is to meet the demands of the junior college transfer without duplication of effort."[8] Each program at the Coordinate Campus, selected from the curricula at the main campuses of C.W. Post and St. Joseph's College, meshes with programs at nearby two-year institutions.

Each institution provides resources and expertise in its fields of proven capability. C.W. Post provides all major field course work for the baccalaureate degree in general business; St. Joseph's provides the liberal arts component, and the degree is awarded by C.W. Post. St. Joseph's offers a baccalaureate program in human relations, for which C.W. Post provides a 12-credit criminal justice sequence; the degree is conferred by St. Joseph's College. All graduate-level programs, including master's programs in early childhood education and in criminal justice, are offered by C.W. Post. In an innovative configuration, the C.W. Post master's degree in criminal justice has been telescoped with St. Joseph's College's degree in human relations. In this combined 3/2 program, 12 credits of criminal justice courses are substituted for the undergraduate program in human relations offered by St. Joseph's. The student is awarded the human relations degree from St. Joseph's College and the master of professional studies degree from C.W. Post.

Priority to Transfer Students

The ACE report, "From Junior to Senior College: A National Study of the Transfer Student," generally accepted as the outstanding piece of research on the

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subject, indicates that transfer students are overlooked in many of the student services, orientation programs, and extra-curricular activities at most four-year institutions: "The new freshman continued to be the preferred client of the four-year institution . . ."[9] The Coordinate Campus is devoted exclusively to transfer students. With the elimination of the "preferred client" problem, all extra-curricular activities and student services take into consideration the special circumstances of transfer students. The upper-division campus, in terms of its effect on transfer students, is not without difficulties, yet the Coordinate Campus appears to be meeting the challenge.

Administrative Cooperation

The Coordinate Campus realizes economies through joint utilization of physical facilities, always one of the most costly items in the budgets of institutions. Operational expenses are shared and necessary capital improvements are jointly decided upon. Each institution has an advisory council comprised of faculty and academic administrators at the parent campus and one representative of the other institution. In this manner, each institution is a party to the projected future plans of its counterpart involving the Coordinate Campus. Such communication provides opportunities for further integration of curricula, exchange of resources, and mutual agreement on commitment of resources and utilization of facilities. Curricular decisions originate with the departments, and are approved by the advisory councils of each institution. Decisions on faculty employment remain with the existing departments of the parent institutions.

A jointly-appointed financial aid officer provides all services for both institutions. Promotional flyers and advertisements, recruitment activities, and telephone services are also shared. The library resources provide immediate access to over 60,000 volumes at the Coordinate Campus, with a fully operating professional library staff, an expanded acquisitions budget, and a built-in means of savings through central purchasing and processing of library materials at the main campuses of the parent institutions. Fees for such services as parking are paid to the coordinate campus; instructional fees are apportioned to the institution originating the course at its normal tuition rate.

Specialization Retaining Flexibility

A number of restrictions face upper-division institutions. The student population, transferring from two-year community or junior colleges, is likely to be oriented primarily to such professional fields as business administration or education. These areas of study require advanced curricula, necessitating the establishment of a fairly specialized faculty. Highly-specialized faculty members rarely possess similar levels of expertise in more than one subject area. Moreover, there are no introductory courses at an upper-division institution with which to round out the teaching schedules of the faculty. As a result, most upper-level institutions find themselves with a rather costly program, due to reduced teaching loads, or they must establish programs staffed primarily by adjunct faculty. Fortunately, due to the proximity of the parent institutions to the Coordinate Campus—each within 40 miles—the full-time faculty resources of the home campus can be used to support the upper-division programs.

According to Dr. Boyer, ". . . campuses should be viewed as bases of operation, rather than places of confinement." Although the statement referred primarily to students, experiences at the Coordinate Campus have expanded the concept to include faculty and other institutional resources. This has transformed a potentially costly idea into an economically successful operation. When declining enrollments are experienced at the parent campus, faculty schedules can be rounded out with teaching assignments at the Coordinate Campus. By this means, students have the benefit of programs supported by full-time faculty.

Other inherent problems stem from the lack of courses at the freshman and sophomore level. Although recent changes in many college curricula make it increasingly difficult to defend most distinctions between freshman/sophomore level and upper-division courses, many upper-division institutions feel it inappropriate to offer lower-level courses. However, elimination of the first two years does not permit the usual economic savings in the crossover of junior and senior level students into freshman and sophomore courses. Upper-division institutions are also faced with difficulties in tailoring programs for students who have changed major fields of study or who are admitted with limited academic deficiencies. The structure of the Coordinate Campus provides solutions for these problems: drawing upon the parent institution as a resource base, the Coordinate Campus can employ a variety of expedients. Students with specific course deficiencies may avail themselves of the full programs at either parent campus during summer sessions or in such special intensified programs as the Weekend College or a mini-semester. Furthermore, if sufficient numbers of students require a specific course, there is little difficulty in offering the course at the Coordinate Campus. For most upper-division institutions, new courses would have to be devised, approved and staffed as such needs arise.

Upper-Division Education: A New Approach

Thus, the Coordinate Campus student has the opportunity to attend an institution where transfer students are the main focus of attention; yet, the program is, simultaneously, enhanced by the availability of the full range of freshman and sophomore level courses. The value of the institution has recently been confirmed by the decision of Suffolk County Community College to open a satellite campus in Brentwood. Two years from now, many students who enrolled this

fall may transfer to the Coordinate Center.

The upper and lower segments of the baccalaurate are at times separated for both philosophical and economic reasons. However, certain exigencies require crossovers and a blurring of the distinction. The Coordinate Campus concept attempts to bridge the gap, as well as the division between the undergraduate and the master's degree.

The complexities of inter-institutional cooperation are evident, but the essential need to create new educational relationships is also apparent. Demands for flexibility and innovation will increase as open access, new instructional technology and expanded knowledge reshape higher education. The openness required for an effective cooperative endeavor frequently presents difficult choices and unusual dilemmas for educators. Ideally, inter-institutional cooperation will replace competition, or at least raise it to a more professional level, and eliminate unnecessary duplication which persists in higher education in the United States.[10]

—Russell T. Lauper
Victor P. Meskill

NOTES

[1]Boyer, Ernest L., "Changing Dimensions in Higher Education," *The College Board Review*, No. 87, Spring 1973, p. 20.

[2]Altham, Robert A., "The Upper Division College: Blueprint or Blind Alley?", *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. XLI, No. 3, March 1970, p. 205.

[3]Shell, Helene I., "A Profile of Upper-Level Colleges," *Research Currents*, ERIC Higher Education, p. 3.

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[5]Willingham, Warren W., *The Number 2 Access Problem: Transfer to the Upper Division*, Washington, D.C., American Association for Higher Education, 1972.

[6]Altman, Robert A., *The Upper Division College*, San Francisco, Jossey Bass, Inc., 1970, pp. 92-93.

[7]Meskill, Victor P., and Sheffield, Wesley, "Research on Transfer Students: A Review of the Literature," *College Student Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 2, September-October, 1971, pp. 94-105.

[8]Higbee, J. Marvin, "Upper Division Colleges: An End to Transfer Hurdles," *Community and Junior College Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 6, March 1973, p. 44.

[9]Knoell, Dorothy M., and Medsker, Leland, *From Junior to Senior College: A National Study of the Transfer Student*, Washingt, D.C., American Council on Education, 1965, p. 28.

[10]Hesburgh, Theodore M., Miller, Paul A., Wharton, Jr., Clifton, R., *Patterns for Lifelong Learning*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1973, p. 116.